



## Family Ties

**GRACE**

*We need God's love.*

### Power Text

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent . . . but born of God" (John 1:12, 13, NIV).

### Key Texts and References

John 11:1-3, 36, 51, 52; 1:12; 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:19; Matt. 12:46-50; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 524, 525; student story on page 54 of this guide.

### Objectives

#### The students will:

**Know** that God wants them to always be in His big family.

**Feel** assured of always belonging to God's family.

**Respond** by celebrating the unity that family brings.

### Power Point



**God promises believers that our place in His family is sure.**

## Getting Ready to Teach

### The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus often enjoyed staying with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha's family. Jesus wants us to know that we always have a place in His heavenly family.

#### ***This is a lesson about grace.***

Just as surely as we have accepted Jesus into our life, He has accepted us into His family. In His heavenly house we

each have a room just for us.

### Teacher Enrichment

Little is said in Scripture about the earthly family of Jesus. However, Jesus is identified with His family in Matthew 13:54-56, where the people ask: "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't

# FIVE

| Program Notes         |         |                                                                                |                                                                                 |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lesson Section        | Minutes | Activities                                                                     | Materials Needed                                                                |
| Welcome               | Ongoing | Greet students at door<br>Hear pleased/troubled                                |                                                                                 |
| 1 Readiness           | 10-15   | A. <i>Family Photo</i><br><br>B. <i>Is There A Place for Me?</i>               | Activity sheet (p. 139), pencils or markers, students' family photos (numbered) |
| * Prayer and Praise*  | 15-20   | See page 50.<br>*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program. |                                                                                 |
| 2 Bible Lesson        | 15-20   | Introducing the Bible Story                                                    |                                                                                 |
|                       |         | Experiencing the Story                                                         | Copies of Family Vignettes                                                      |
|                       |         | Exploring the Bible                                                            | Bibles                                                                          |
| 3 Applying the Lesson | 10-15   | <i>Family Council</i>                                                          |                                                                                 |
| 4 Sharing the Lesson  | 10-15   | <i>Family Invitation</i>                                                       | Construction paper, markers, envelopes, art supplies                            |

all his sisters with us?" Unfortunately, according to John 7:3-5, "even his own brothers did not believe in him."

But it is possible that two of his brothers became leaders in the church. About his first trip to Jerusalem after his conversion, Paul says in Galatians 1:19, "I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother." The book of Jude beginning, "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James," possibly means that the writer was a brother of Jesus.

According to *The Desire of Ages*, Jesus did not always find comfort in His family. His brothers often saw Him full of grief,

but instead of comforting Him, their spirit and words only wounded His heart. "So pained was Christ by the misapprehension in His own home that it was a relief to Him to go where it did not exist. There was one home that He loved to visit—the home of Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha; for in the atmosphere of faith and love His spirit had rest" (p. 326).

*How "safe" did I feel in my family of origin? How safe do I feel with my place in God's family? What promises can I surround myself with today that will help me feel secure as a rightful heir to the royal family?*

## Teaching the Lesson

### Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their table/small group leader. Have leader ask how their week has been—what they're pleased/troubled about. Then debrief student(s) on their Bible study activities last week. Say: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** (The leader should know what the students' activities were for the past week so he/she can direct discussion.)

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice.

# 1

### Readiness Activities

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

#### A. Family Photo

##### You Need:

- activity sheet (p. 139)
- pencils OR markers
- student's family photos (numbered)

**Part One:** Ahead of time, photocopy the Family Photo activity sheet (p.139) for each student; set the handouts near the door for the students to work on when they arrive. Also set up a display of family photos from families of your students, showing the students much smaller and perhaps unrecognizable. Tape a number to each framed photograph. (The activity sheet asks the students to name the families.)

Allow time for the students to draw their families according to the directions on the activity sheet. Give them a two-minute warning before time is up so they can draw outlines and write names for the remaining family members they haven't drawn yet.

**Part Two:** When the time is up divide the students into "family" groups by using the numbers you gave out at the door (or some other way that works better for your situation). Explain that each group is a family and should choose a head of the family. Families will stay together for the rest of Sabbath School. If some complain they are not with their friends, remind them that in real life we don't get to choose our families.

Ask: **As a group, see if you can agree on the identity of the family in picture frame number one. As soon as you do, the head of your family will stand.** Pause until two or three family heads stand. Ask them to give their answer, then announce the true family identity. In a similar way, identify all the families.

#### Debriefing

**Why are our families so special to us?** (Accept their responses.) **Reflect for a minute on the people you drew on your Family Photo sheet. Circle the person you feel closest to in your family.** (Pause while they do it.) **Now take turns, starting with the person to the left of your family head. Tell your group whom you chose as your closest family member and why.**

Allow time for most of the students to speak. Then get their attention and ask: **Suppose that something happened and the person you circled was to drop out of your family. Maybe because of death. How would you feel?** Give the students a minute to share their feelings with the person sitting next to them. Ask for volunteers to share their feelings with the larger group. (Many will be saddened by the thought of losing the loved one.) Read John 1:12, 13. **This text assures me that I am in God's family. He has circled my picture. He loves me most of all. He feels the same way about you. But guess what! He will never drop you out of His family. Only you can take yourself out.**



God promises believers that our place in His family is sure.

## B. Is There a Place for Me?

The object of this activity is for students to mill around and quickly form groups according to the number you call out. The ones that are unable to become a part of one of the groups are eliminated. Alternate odd and even numbers.

For example, with a group of 30, begin by having them form groups of seven (eliminate two). Then have them form groups of four (none are eliminated). Next, have them form groups of five (eliminate three)—then groups of six, groups of five, groups of eight, groups of seven, groups of four, groups of five, groups of three, groups of four, etc.

To make this more dramatic, you might try using a strobe light. If you do, have judges who move quickly to determine who has not been able to become part of a group.

### Debriefing

Have students reassemble in their family groups (if assigned during Readiness A) and each tell how they felt when they were included in a group and when they were finally excluded. (Allow time.) Then ask: **What do the feelings you just expressed have to do with the subject of families?** (It's good to belong to one. Some people don't have any. It's hard to be rejected by your family.) Read John 1:12. **John is telling us that if we believe in Jesus, we belong to His family—now. This new family that God has created is just as important for us as the family He gave us here on earth. And guess what:**



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## Prayer and Praise

### Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

### Suggested Songs

Choose songs about family relationships and about grace.

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (*He Is Our Song*, No. 146)

Add a verse: "I am so happy I'm in God's fam'ly."

"Ha-la-la-la-la" (*He Is Our Song*, No. 120)

Add a verse: Celebrate together; we're all God's fam'ly.

Celebrate the fam'ly that we are.

Celebrate together; we're all God's fam'ly.

Celebrate that we are God's fam-i-ly!

### Prayer

Have the students stay in family groups. Suggest that they pray going around the group, each praying for the person to their left and for that person's family.

### Mission

Say: **Now it is time for an update on our world family. Maybe we will discover something about what God has been doing with the offering that we brought in past years—before we were even old enough to understand about our world family.**

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* or another mission report available to you. Read the report and then tell it very briefly in your own words.

### Offering

**You Need:** basket or envelope with "Family" in decorative lettering

Say: **William Johnsson, editor of *Adventist Review*, says of his family: "Our family was very supportive. When as a university student I needed a motorcycle and later a car, my brothers lent me the money. There was never any thought that I should go outside the family to borrow the money. In the family of God we support our world family by bringing an offering from our own allowance. Thank you for remembering the world family today."**

### You Need:

- basket OR envelope with "Family" in decorative lettering OR covered with digital pictures of church family

\* Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

## 2

## Bible Lesson

**Introducing the Bible Story**

Say: **For four weeks we will be studying John 11. We will keep coming back and looking at the whole story of Lazarus, his sickness, death, and resurrection. Today we are focusing on the idea of family. The family of Lazarus was the family Jesus most liked to spend time with.**

**Experiencing the Story****You Need:**

- copies of Family Vignettes

Ahead, photocopy the Family Vignettes and cut apart the four sets of directions. Make as many copies as you need so that each family group can have one set of directions (or divide students into four groups).

Each group reads and follows the directions given to them, acting out what they think might have happened in the families described. Allow several minutes for each group to read the passage and plan how to act it out.

(Small church, just read all four stories one after the other and have students retell the story, manipulating puppets or a stack of wooden blocks that represent the characters. They move the blocks or turn them, making them act lifelike while someone says what the character would have said.)

**Debriefing**

After the groups have completed their skits, say: **Think for a moment about these four family scenes. What do you think young peo-**

**Family Vignettes**

**Directions to the teacher: Make as many copies as you need to give one set of directions to each group.**

Matthew 7:3-5. (Notice that in these verses Jesus' brothers are telling Him what to do; even in childhood His brothers did not understand His mission and tried to tell Him what to do, Ellen White tells us. Show Jesus as a child with His brothers picking on Him and bossing Him around.)

Matthew 12:46-50. (Show someone telling Jesus that His family is outside; emphasize that all those who believe are His family too.)

Luke 10:38-41. (Ellen White tells us in *The Desire of Ages*, page 557, that it was Jesus' custom to seek rest at Lazarus' house when He was passing through Bethany. Show Jesus feeling welcome and relaxed in Martha's home; Mary sits and asks Him questions; show humor in Jesus' voice when He says, "Martha, Martha!" You can stop at this point.)

John 11:1-3. (Bring out the feelings of the sisters as they care for Lazarus and write a letter to Jesus; show the love and understanding Jesus enjoys with this family.)

**ple most need in a family?** (faith, love, loyalty, patience, etc.) **Give examples of how the Bethany family filled Jesus' need.** (They believed in Jesus; Mary listened to Him; Martha loved to fix food for Him; Jesus went there to relax.)

**What can Jesus offer a person who doesn't feel loved in their family?** (Accept responses, if any.) **Jesus knows how that feels; His own family were often critical of Him.** Read students the first quotation from *The Desire of Ages* in the Teacher Enrichment section.

Read John 1:12. **If you feel as if your family is not there for you, you have a heavenly family that is.**



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## Exploring the Bible

### You Need:

- Bibles

Say: **Wrapped up in Jesus is a message of grace for families. We need to take a closer look at what that message is.**

**1. Look at what the angels said at His birth.** Read Luke 2:14. **What did they say was in it for us?** (peace and favor) **Peace and favor are for families, not just for governments. Peace means that God is not at war with us and we need not be at war with one another in the family. And favor means that God has a preference for you. You are His favorite. So you can afford to show favor to family members. This is God's grace for families.**

**2. The second point we need to make is about God's family. Little children know that they are spe-**

**cial to God. They know they belong to Him. But at your age you are soon going to wonder:**

- (A.) Is God's love for real? and**
- (B.) Is God's love forever?**

### A. Is it real?

Say John 3:16 together. Ask: **How real was Jesus' death on the cross?** (It is recorded in history. Eye witnesses recorded the event.) **God's family is as real as Jesus' death on the cross.**

Find and read John 1:12 together. **Receiving Jesus means that we admit that we need a Saviour and invite Jesus to live in us. Then what happens when you receive Jesus, according to this text?** ("He gave the right to become children of God.") **This is real. It starts right away.**

### B. Is it forever?

Make the peace sign with just two fingers raised in a V. Say: **These two fingers represent God's peace and favor that Jesus brings into our life. Our thumb that is folded over is Jesus, whom we have received into our life. The other two folded fingers are our desires and our interests that we give to Jesus. Now we can say, "Not my will but Yours be done." If we accept peace with Jesus and agree to what it means, we are His children. Forever. We might wander away or let Him down, but He is always ready to make peace and accept us back. Is this forever? It can be.** Read Jude 24, 25.



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## 3

## Applying the Lesson

**Family Council**

The object of this activity is to give families a chance to solve a problem together and to be aware how fortunate they are to have family.

Say: **Huddle together in your family groups** (developed during Readiness A) **and solve this problem. (Your group leader is your family head, and the person to their right will be the reporter.) Your house is fairly small. Already two people share a bedroom. A homeless person has requested to come live with you. What answer will you give? Whose room will he or she share? You have three minutes to come to an agreement.**

Walk around the groups, getting them started and listening to their discussions without getting involved. After

about four minutes, give a one-minute warning and ask the families to take a vote. Then call everyone to order.

**Debriefing**

Ask: **How many families decided to take in the homeless person? How easy is it to make room for someone else in your family?** (Usually, no.) Read Ephesians 2:19. **According to this text, you and I were the homeless person. We were locked out of the garden along with Adam and Eve. We had no forever home. But God, without hesitation, wants us in His family.**



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## 4

## Sharing the Lesson

**Family Invitation****You Need:**

- construction paper
- markers
- envelopes
- art supplies

The students get to choose a way to celebrate being part of God's heavenly family. They may work separately or together to do one of the following:

1. Make a greeting

card that says "Rejoice with me"; inside the card, tell in your own words why you are excited about being part of God's family of believers.

2. Make a poster that says "We are children of God" and invite your friends and church family to write their names on the poster. Tape it to the door.

3. Write a song based on John 1:12.

**Closing**

Form a circle and sing "Side by Side" (*He Is Our Song*, No. 123). Encourage students to share the good news of God's family.

**Note:** If possible, photocopy the hymn "Face to Face" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, No. 206) for students Bible study time during the week.



## STUDENT LESSON

# Family Ties

## Key Text

John 11

## Power Text

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent . . . but born of God" (John 1:12, 13, NIV).

## Power Point

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*"You were adopted," Linda whispered to her younger sister, Kathy, even though she remembered clearly the day her sister was born.*

*"What?" Kathy gasped.*

*"Yeah. Mom and Dad adopted you just like they adopted Ronnie."*

*"No way!"*

*"You don't have large eyes or curly hair like the rest of us. See, you look like Ronnie," Linda lied. Weeks later, after Kathy angrily demanded to know whether or not her parents had lied to her, the whole mean mess was straightened out.*

*If you have ever doubted that you belong in your family, you may be surprised to learn that Jesus knows how that feels. In this lesson Jesus and the apostle John help set the story straight about family—forever.*

Jewish children of Jesus' time learned to obey all the rigid rules taught by the Pharisees. But Jesus was never as concerned about those rules as He was about serving God. As a result, Jesus' brothers were often ashamed of their younger brother.

"What will the neighbors think?" His brother James might have asked when Jesus took a long walk on Sabbath.

"Why aren't You reading the teachings of the Rabbis?" Jude may have asked when Jesus sat memorizing the Old Testament. "You would impress the rabbi if You could argue from the scholars. And impressing the rabbi is a must if You want to get accepted at the Temple." But Jesus knew that the words of life were not in Jewish tradition, but in the Bible. His brothers meant well, but they brought no comfort to a young boy on a special mission for God.

Satan, too, continually troubled Jesus with doubts about Himself and His origins in the family. His mother was probably not married until she was noticeably pregnant. So some people, letting their imaginations run away with them, called Him names. "We don't know where You came from," they accused.

Under continual stress, any child would have longed for a hug and reassurance that He was doing a good job. But instead of comfort, Jesus' brothers caused Him additional grief with their steady criticism. So Jesus grew up as many people do, with an inner pool of tears—a hollow place that love from family should have filled.

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, two adult sisters and their brother living in Bethany, two miles from Jerusalem, opened their warm, loving home to Jesus. Here the Master found the rest and peace that He had often missed in His own family. Maybe in Lazarus, Jesus found an understanding, older brother. When Jesus was traveling to or from Jerusalem, He stayed with these friends.

Near the end of His ministry, while on the other side of the Jordan River, Jesus one day received a brief message: "Lord, the one you love is sick" (John 11:3, NIV). The disciples, watching anxiously for Jesus' reaction, immediately knew the message referred to Lazarus. Who else was Jesus so close to?

Later when Jesus wept with Mary at Lazarus' tomb, the staring onlookers whispered, "See how he loved him"

(verse 36, NIV). But Jesus loved the whisperers just as much as He loved Lazarus. The difference with Lazarus was that he received Jesus' love. And that simple act made him family. To all who receive Jesus, God gives the right to become children of God. Their place in His family is sure.

## Sabbath

- Do this week's activity on page 38.

## Sunday

- Read "Family Ties."
- Read the power text. What does this text say about you?
- Ask God to give you the certainty that you are His child.

## Monday

- Read John 11:1-3, 36; Matthew 12:46-50; and John 1:12.
- Underline John 11:36 and think: *This is how Jesus feels about me!*
- Begin learning the power text.
- Ask God to let you feel His love.

## Tuesday

- Read John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:22; and Ephesians 2:19.
- Practice saying your power text.
- Ask if you can see your birth certificate.
- Make a birth certificate for your entrance into the family of God.
- Write in your Bible study journal a prayer based on the texts you read today.

## Wednesday

- Read and underline John 11:50-52.

- In what way might you be a "scattered" child of God? What does "bring them together and make them one" have to do with family? with you?
- Pray for your family and for God's family.

## Thursday

- Explain John 1:12 to a friend.
- "Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 327).
- Tell someone how John 1:12 and this week's story help a person know for sure that they belong to God's family.
- Plan a worship for your family for tomorrow that celebrates family.
- Ask God to guide your plans.

## Friday

- Do your special family worship with the help of your family.
- Ask an adult to tell you how they feel about God's family.
- Say the power text together.
- During your prayer time, ask each family member present to pray for the person on their right. Also, remember family members who are not with you. Close by thanking God for the ability to be a part of His family.